



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
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Some Forest Roads and Trails to Be Impacted By Ongoing Beetle Work

(WALDEN, Col - Oct 11, 2011) – Forest management activities will continue and new projects will be implemented this fall and winter across the Parks Ranger District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests. Projects include hazard tree removal from roadsides, commercial timber harvest, fuels reduction, slash pile burning, road maintenance and reconstruction, and OHV trail improvement.

New hazard tree removal projects will be starting in the Onion Park, Line Creek and the Lone Pine Road areas. Hazard tree removal work will continue from both the Gould and Rand access routes to Owl Mountain. Timber hauling from projects in Wyoming and on the Hahn's Peak/Bear's Ears District will increase truck traffic on Forest Road 80 between Pearl and Hog Park. Forest Road 60 to Buffalo Pass remains open on the Walden side but is closed on the Steamboat Springs side for reconstruction through this fall. OHV trail work will also continue as long as weather permits, affecting the North Fork North Platte River crossing at the Helena Trailhead.

Forest visitors should be aware of these activities and plan for potential detours, delays and closures of some roads and trails. Work may occur along major access routes, on weekends and holidays, and during big game hunting seasons. Logging machinery and log trucks may be encountered along National Forest Roads. Visitors are advised to watch for new signs and changed conditions while traveling on the forest. Do not enter areas which are posted closed, as they are closed for public safety.

With the first rifle elk season starting this weekend, the Forest Service recognizes that the timing of such projects is not ideal. However, forest visitors are reminded that these short-term inconveniences are for their safety and that most affected areas remain open for access by foot and horse.

"I understand that closing roads is never popular but we are reaching the point where our roads must be treated to ensure safe, long-term access," said Parks District Ranger, Mike Wright.

Most of this work is in response to impacts from the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Efforts will reduce hazards to visitors, private land owners and Forest Service employees. Despite ongoing hazard reduction, visitors need to be aware of the risk of falling trees anytime they enter the forest. Trees impacted by the beetles appear red or have no needles, but green trees left after fuels reduction or hazard tree removal treatments are also susceptible to wind throw due to removal of the trees around them. Remember to look up, look down and look around before setting up camps or parking vehicles under dead trees. Please be aware of the surroundings while visiting areas affected by the epidemic.

Please call the Parks Ranger District office at 970-723-2700 to inquire about current conditions and to check the status of work in the area of planned visits.

List of Parks Ranger District Projects

1. Green Ridge Area Timber Sales are not active at this time. Roads and trails in the Willow Creek area, including NFSR 106, 715, 730, 735, and 751 are open subject to normal seasonal restrictions and conditions on the Motor Vehicle Use Map.
2. Sierra Madre Stewardship Contract is not active at this time. Roads and trails in the Hog Park area are open subject to the current Motor Vehicle Use Map. Some roads on the Brush Creek/Hayden District may be closed in this area, so contact that district at 307.326.5258 for additional information.
3. Encampment Timber Sale is not active at this time. Roads and trails in the Hog Park area are open subject to the current Motor Vehicle Use Map. Some roads on the Brush Creek/Hayden District may be closed in this area, so contact that district at 307.326.5258 for additional information.
4. FHTR (Forest Hazard Tree Removal) Grouse Fuels and Hazard Tree Contract Task Order
Work is complete on NFSRs 12, 112, 121, 125, 262 and spurs in this area accessed from US Highway 40 near Hot Sulphur Springs. Work will be done on NFSR 19 and 137 during 2012.
5. Gould Stewardship Project
Work is scheduled to be complete on this sale near Gould along NFSR 740 as of October 31, 2011.
6. FHTR North Owl Mountain Hazard Tree Contract Task Order
Work is continuing on NFSR 740 at Calamity Pass south of Gould, so no through traffic is allowed Monday through Friday. Calamity Pass will remain open on weekends from 5 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Monday as long as weather permits. Hunters and campers should be careful to avoid being locked inside the work area by leaving the area on Sunday evening. Motorized trails in this area are also affected, so check with the district for more detailed information.
7. FHTR South Owl Mountain Hazard Tree Contract Task Order
Work will continue on NFSRs 742, 743 and 750 in the Rand area through fall. There will be no through traffic on NFSR 750 to Illinois Pass. Through traffic on NFSR 740 will be allowed on weekends from 5 p.m. Friday to 7 a.m. Monday as long as weather permits. Hunters and campers should be careful to avoid being locked inside the work area by leaving the area on Sunday evening. Motorized trails in this area are also affected, so check with the district for more detailed information.
8. FHTR Onion Park Hazard Tree Contract Task Order
Work will continue on NFSRs 80 and 691 in the Pearl area through fall. Work will begin on NFSR 609 in approximately November and could continue through the winter.
9. FHTR Lone Pine Hazard Tree Contract Task Order
Work will begin along NFSR 640 in the vicinity of the Lone Pine North and South Trailheads west of Walden on about November 15, 2011. No through traffic to the Katherine Trailhead will be allowed during this period.
10. Slash Pile Burning
Slash piles around Big Creek Lakes, Twisty Park and along Forest Road 80 will be burned beginning this fall.
11. Grizzly-Helena Trail Crossing Project at Helena Trailhead
The north end of this trail remains closed to motorized travel pending construction of a trail bridge at this location. The contract for this work has been awarded and some construction may still occur if weather permits this fall.

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